United Nations E/2010/SR.1

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

4 March 2010

Original: English

Organizational session for 2010

Provisional summary record of the 1st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 19 January 2010, at 10 a.m.

Temporary President: Ms. Lucas ..... (Luxembourg)

President: Mr. Ali ..... (Malaysia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Temporary President** declared open the organizational session for 2010 of the Economic and Social Council.

Briefing by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on the situation in Haiti

2. **The Temporary President** expressed her condolences to the Government and people of Haiti following the earthquake of 12 January.

3. *At the invitation of the Temporary President, the members of the Council observed a minute of silence.*

4. **Mr. Khalikov** (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) said it was estimated that one third of Haiti's population had been affected by the earthquake. Priority needs included medical assistance, shelter, food and water, and sanitation. United Nations personnel had been deployed to Haiti and were helping to coordinate the relief effort. While access to the victims of the earthquake remained difficult owing to airport congestion and seaport damage, aid had begun to reach the survivors. The United Nations was currently working with international partners to deliver supplies to some 300,000 people and would ramp up efforts to reach 2 million shortly.

5. The international community had shown great solidarity with the people of Haiti, with a large number of countries actively prioritizing relief efforts and making assets available to humanitarian agencies. Nearly 20 per cent of the US$ 575 million requested in the Secretary-General's flash appeal for Haiti had been raised already. In addition, the Secretary-General had approved the release of $25 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund for projects in Haiti. Sweden deserved special thanks for its contribution of a module to accommodate humanitarian workers in Haiti. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was working closely with countries providing peacekeeping troops to deal with security concerns, especially during the distribution of aid.

6. **Mr. McNee** (Canada), speaking on behalf of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, expressed his condolences to all those affected by the earthquake, to their families and to all the United Nations staff troops and police in Haiti. He called on donors for a quick and generous response to the flash appeal launched by the Secretary-General to help the population of Haiti recover as quickly as possible. As urgent humanitarian assistance gradually gave way to recovery and reconstruction phases, concerted efforts must focus on the long-term development needs of the Haitian population. Such efforts should be solidly grounded in the priorities of the Government of Haiti and should contribute to strengthening its capacity to lead the reconstruction process. He underlined the importance of coordinating efforts on the ground through the Government of Haiti and the United Nations.

7. **Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo** (Observer for Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the whole world was in mourning for Haiti. The European Union had responded swiftly to the country's humanitarian needs by convening an extraordinary session of the Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels. The outcome document of that session underlined the generous response of the European Union to Haiti's short- and long-term needs and highlighted the critical role of the United Nations in coordinating the relief efforts of the international community. The Council had also called for an international conference to consider additional measures of solidarity with Haiti, once post-emergency needs had been fully assessed by international organizations.

8. **Mr. St. Aimee** (Saint Lucia), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community, expressed his deepest sympathy to the Government and people of Haiti as well as to the families of United Nations personnel who had lost their lives as a result of the earthquake. Such tragic events were a reminder not only of everyone's vulnerability but also of everyone's responsibility to each other. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) was making concerted efforts to provide assistance and leadership to Haiti based on its strengths in agriculture, health and education, in order to help turn a tragic situation into an opportunity for medium- to long-term development. He commended the resilience of the people of Haiti and the generosity of the international community's response and pledged the unwavering support of CARICOM in the relief effort.

9. **Mr. Mérorès** (Observer for Haiti) extended gratitude for the condolences expressed to his country and for the continued support provided by the Council and the international community as a whole.

Statement by the Temporary President

10. **The Temporary President** said that the Council's work in 2009 should be viewed within the context of several global crises, to which the Council had endeavoured to respond effectively. The April 2009 special high-level meeting of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) had highlighted the need to address the global financial and economic crisis in a coherent, coordinated manner and to deal with its human impact in order to avert a large-scale human tragedy. The summary of the discussions had in turn been used to prepare the draft outcome document of the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, held in June.

11. In recognition of the coordinating role of the Council, the Conference had entrusted it with several mandates relating, in particular, to enhancing a coordinated response by the United Nations development system to the crises, strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, and possibly establishing an ad hoc panel of experts on the world financial and economic crisis and its impact on development (A/CONF.209/11, para. 1). While further consultations were needed in order to carry out some of those mandates, the groundwork had already been laid for their implementation. Other mandates had been duly fulfilled; in that connection, she noted the establishment of a strengthened and more effective intergovernmental inclusive process to follow up on financing for development. The General Assembly had recently endorsed the recommendations submitted by the Council on that topic; the challenge now lay in implementing them and in ensuring follow-up on financing for development. The organization of the 2010 special high-level meeting of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO and UNCTAD would prove an excellent opportunity in that regard.

12. The 2009 annual ministerial review, focusing on public health, had succeeded in galvanizing political attention towards the implementation of health-related goals. The Council had adopted a ministerial declaration that underscored the need for multisectoral people-centred and results-oriented approaches, as well as the strong link between the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and poverty eradication. It had created new opportunities for collaboration and for the engagement of new stakeholders by promoting consensus on actions to advance the realization of global public health goals. The seven national voluntary presentations that had taken place during the review, and the growing interest for participation in 2010, demonstrated the value of the Council as a platform for engaging the global community in exchanging critical lessons learned in the implementation of the MDGs.

13. The global dynamics of development cooperation had also been examined by the Council in 2009. In that connection, the Development Cooperation Forum was increasingly recognized as the central forum within the United Nations system for the holistic consideration of development cooperation issues. In June, it would be conducting a global dialogue on accountable, transparent and inclusive development cooperation, based on the high-level symposium on that issue held in Vienna in November.

14. The interaction and institutional links between the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission had also begun to bear fruit, with the participation of the Commission on a number of the Council's panels in 2009 and the holding of a joint event with the World Food Programme in 2009 to consider the impact of the food and economic crises in post-conflict countries. She hoped that the relationship between the two bodies would be further strengthened in the years ahead, reaffirming the Council's clear role in peacebuilding and post-conflict development. She suggested that the institutional links and cooperation between the two bodies might be considered in the context of the 2010 review of the Peacebuilding Commission, taking into account the Council's call for enhanced engagement with the Commission, including with its country-specific configurations.

Election of the President

15. **The Temporary President** said that, under rule 18 of the Council's rules of procedure, in 2010 it was the turn of the Group of Asian States to nominate a candidate for the President. Consequently, she would take it that the Council wished to elect Mr. Hamidon Ali (Malaysia), who had been nominated by the Group, to the post of President.

16. *Mr. Hamidon Ali (Malaysia) was elected President by acclamation.*

17. *Mr. Hamidon Ali (Malaysia) took the Chair.*

Statement by the President

18. **Mr. Hamidon Ali** (Malaysia) said that efforts to reform and strengthen the Council had been altogether too frequent, reflecting a fundamental dissatisfaction with the inability of the Council to fulfil its Charter-mandated functions. While the latest such effort, General Assembly resolution 61/16, could be seen as a sound basis for ensuring the Council's relevance to the work of the United Nations, more needed to be done. Specifically, the Council must adopt a proactive and constructive agenda; adopt shorter, more focused and results-oriented agreements and resolutions; promote greater transparency and honest dialogue; look for technical solutions to problems rather than arguing about the role of the United Nations system in development and international economic governance; and engage more meaningfully in the operational aspects of the Organization's work.

19. The challenges facing the Council should be seen as opportunities for capitalizing on its well-established functions to create new momentum for advancing development. The Council had been called on, for instance, to assist with preparations for the 2010 high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to review progress on the MDGs. Another challenge was to continue strengthening the Council's role in coordination, policy review, dialogue and recommendations relating to economic and social development issues. The Council must play a critical part in coordinating the United Nations response to the global financial crisis.

20. The 2010 annual ministerial review, which would focus on implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women, would be an opportunity for the Council to highlight the gender-related MDGs, tackle the challenges that hampered their achievement and focus on the areas that needed to be considered for the implementation of effective policies. The theme was especially timely as 2010 marked the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. No country could enjoy sustainable development without the involvement of women in all aspects of life. The Council should strive to integrate global, regional and national perspectives on that topic. National voluntary presentations and broad-based regional consultations, if used effectively, could strengthen the Council's role in promoting accountability and effective policy implementation. The engagement of an ever-broader range of actors was crucial to achieving the objectives of the 2010 annual ministerial review, and for gender mainstreaming.

21. The work of the second Development Cooperation Forum, to be held in 2010, was urgent in light of the financial crisis and its implications for the global aid architecture. It was important, in that context, to recognize that difficulties in reaching the internationally agreed development goals, especially the MDGs, would be compounded if development assistance was curtailed now. The 2010 Forum must aim at producing practical results and policy recommendations.

22. The Council should also strengthen its capacity to respond to emerging issues and crises. In particular, the Council must continue to provide a forum to enhance understanding of the implications of crises on development efforts and to promote and enhance a coordinated response by the United Nations system.

Statement by the Deputy Secretary-General

23. **The Deputy Secretary-General** expressed her deep condolences to the people of Haiti. Her heart went out to colleagues, families and friends who had suffered a great loss. In such extremely challenging times, the United Nations was doing all it could to provide support.

24. She was pleased to attend the handover ceremony of the Council Presidency.

25. She congratulated Ambassador Sylvie Lucas and the outgoing Bureau on their leadership. Under their guidance, the Council had succeeded in mobilizing Member States and the entire United Nations system to forge consensus and act swiftly to tackle development challenges.

26. She was confident that the new ECOSOC President, Ambassador Hamidon Ali, and the incoming Bureau would ably steer the Council in 2010 when a major focus of the United Nations work would be on development and, in particular, the Millennium Development Goals.

27. She assured them of her full support and that of the Secretary-General and the entire Secretariat.

28. The next half-decade must see accelerated progress in delivering on long-standing commitments

to the world's poorest and most vulnerable. Progress had been achieved in many countries — across all MDGs and across all regions. There had been important gains in combating extreme poverty, improving school enrolment and child health, expanding access to clean water, controlling malaria and making AIDS treatment more widely available. Yet, despite that success, the world was not on track to meet all the MDGs. It had not yet delivered on necessary financing, technical support and partnerships. The 2010 high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the MDGs would be a crucial opportunity to reinforce efforts and rebuild partnerships for the final push to 2015.

29. ECOSOC had a special role to play in the 2010 MDG review. In June, the Council's annual ministerial review would evaluate progress towards the MDGs, especially on promoting gender equality and empowering women. The 14 national reports to be presented at that session would offer analyses of lessons learned, gaps and obstacles.

30. It would also be important to make the most of the Council's 2010 Development Cooperation Forum to push even further the Organization's development agenda.

31. Turning to the question of system-wide coherence, she noted that the General Assembly would shortly launch a new round of consultations. Two reports had been submitted to facilitate the process.

32. The first covered operational activities for development, with a particular focus on enhancing the functioning of governing bodies, including the Economic and Social Council. She urged Member States to carefully examine how to enable the Council to perform its coordination and guidance role in an effective manner. That might call for greater functional coherence on development issues, policy coordination and setting operational policy for the United Nations development system. It would also require the Council's decisions to be more action-oriented.

33. The second report of the Secretary-General contained a comprehensive proposal for a composite gender entity. The sooner the Organization could get that entity up and running, the better.

34. In recent years, the Council had reached out to a variety of stakeholders. The engagement of civil society had been strengthened, both in terms of policy dialogue and operational collaboration. It had also considerably strengthened its relationship to foundations and the private sector, and initiated a number partnerships. Clearly, there was strong interest from all sides in joining forces and working together. She encouraged the Council to further strengthen that dialogue and cooperation, including at next month's special event on "engaging philanthropy to promote women's empowerment and gender equality".

35. The Economic and Social Council had a vital role in coordinating United Nations system-wide work in the social and economic fields. As multiple crises persisted, and as development challenges became ever more inter-linked, Member States and the entire United Nations family looked to the Council for policy and operational guidance.

36. The Council had much important work ahead. She and the Secretary-General looked forward to working with the Council and wished it a most productive year.

Election of the Bureau

37. **The President** said that rule 18 of its rules of procedure provided for the Council to elect four Vice-Presidents. He took it that the Council wished to elect the candidates nominated by each regional group.

38. *Mr. Soborun (Mauritius), Mr. Cujba (Republic of Moldova), Mr. Muñoz (Chile) and Mr. Wetland (Norway) were elected Vice-Presidents of the Council for 2010 by acclamation.*

39. **Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo** (Observer for Spain), speaking on behalf of the European Union, congratulated the newly elected Bureau and expressed gratitude to the outgoing Bureau for its leadership. The 2010 high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum would all provide opportunities to strengthen the Council's role in the coordination of economic and social affairs. The Council's function in providing and coordinating emergency humanitarian relief and long-term reconstruction efforts would also be reinforced through the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti. The European Union was committed to contributing actively to the Council's important work in 2010.

40. **Ms. Wahab** (Observer for Indonesia) extended gratitude to the outgoing Bureau for its skilled

leadership during several global crises and expressed confidence that the new Bureau would successfully lead the deliberations of the Council in 2010. The Council should strive to address current and future challenges, including follow-up action on the global crises, mitigation of climate change, and achievement of the MDGs, especially food security, with compassion and commitment. She pledged her country's unwavering support for the Council's work on economic and social issues including women's empowerment and the review of the MDGs.

41. **Mr. Davide** (Philippines) expressed appreciation for the outgoing Bureau's work and congratulated the newly elected Bureau. He expressed his condolences to the Government and people of Haiti and said that in addition to sending medical assistance and additional peacekeeping troops, the Philippines had released funds as a gesture of solidarity. The Philippines remained committed to the continued revitalization of the Council.

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (E/2010/1 and E/2010/2 and Corr.1)

42. **The President** invited the Council to adopt the provisional agenda for its 2010 organizational session (E/2010/2 and Corr.1).

43. *The provisional agenda was adopted.*

44. **The President** recalled that in its resolutions 1988/77 and 1989/114, and in its decision 2006/206, the Council had decided to adopt certain measures to revitalize and improve its functioning. The General Assembly, in its resolutions 45/264, 48/162, 50/227, 52/12 B, 57/270 B and 61/16, had also taken important steps to restructure and revitalize the Council. On the basis of those guidelines, the Council would have before it for consideration at its organizational session the annotated provisional agenda (E/2010/2 and Corr.1) and the proposed basic programme of work for the Council for 2010 and 2011 (E/2010/1).

45. In conformity with the provisions of paragraph 2 (l) of Council resolution 1988/77, informal consultations would be held on the proposed basic programme of work and on the other matters requiring action by the Council at the organizational session.

46. Turning to the question of seating arrangements for delegations, he proposed that, as in the past, lots should be drawn to determine which delegation would occupy the first seat.

47. *The delegation of Zambia was selected by the drawing of lots to take the first seat.*

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.